

Vision Screening FAQ – Public - June 1, 2012

What is vision screening and why is it important?

Vision screening, for the purpose of obtaining a driver license, involves an individual meeting a basic visual acuity test. A person is asked to read a chart of letters (Snellen) to determine their visual acuity in each eye. Drivers with 20/50 visual acuity meet the State's standard for driving.

I recently visited my optometrist for a routine eye exam. Why did my eye doctor say he would be able to report my vision to the Motor Vehicle Commission?

The MVC has introduced a vision screening program for New Jersey drivers. The program is supported by the State's leading medical associations. Drivers who have their eye care provider submit vision screening results will comply with the state's vision screening requirements. These drivers will not need a new vision screening (for the purpose of maintaining a driver's license) for at least 10 years.

What do I need to do?

Participating eye care providers will inform their patients of driver vision screening requirements and offer to submit screening results after the eye exam is completed. During the routine exam, all information needed to report screening results will be collected. The provider will also need to collect and enter information from your driver license so that your driver record can be updated.

Why is the MVC doing this program now?

The MVC was previously unable to provide a convenient vision screening method for motorists. The State's eye care providers have offered to provide screening services and help the MVC implement vision screening requirements. Vision screening will help many drivers identify and correct vision impairments.

What is the State's vision standard?

Drivers must have at least 20/50 visual acuity vision in one eye, either with or without corrective lenses.

I do not want my eye care professional to report my vision results to the MVC. Can my license be suspended?

If you agree to have your vision screened, the eye care specialist is required to report a driver's inability to meet the minimum visual acuity standard.

I contacted my eye care provider's office and they said they are not participating. What should I do?

At this time the MVC vision program is a voluntary pilot program and unfortunately some eye care providers may not be familiar with the program. Eye care providers can be encouraged visit <http://www.nj.gov/mvc> and learn more about participation.

My eye care provider gave me an eyeglasses prescription. Can I send that to the MVC in order to meet the vision requirement?

No. Only participating eye care providers can submit a driver's vision screening results.

How will my vision results be reported to the MVC?

The MVC is providing participating eye care providers with access to a special web site using a login ID. The web site allows the eye care provider to report vision screening results for a patient/driver. It will be necessary for the eye care provider to request your driver license in order to accurately complete the report. The report is used by the MVC to update your driver record. Once your record has been updated, you will not need to complete vision screening again for at least 10 years.

Is New Jersey the only state checking driver vision?

No. Several other states require their licensed drivers to periodically demonstrate that they meet vision standards. For example, Pennsylvania drivers are randomly selected for vision screening.

My eye care provider is not participating in the vision screening program. How can I find an eye care provider who will be able to submit my vision screening results?

Members of the State's eye and medical associations are assisting with the MVC's vision screening program. Each association can provide a list of participating members.

Does every driver require a vision screening, regardless of their age?

Yes. The law and its requirements are not age-based. Every licensed driver, regardless of age, will eventually need to demonstrate visual acuity that meets the vision standard.

I have a Commercial Driver License (CDL) and already meet vision requirements. Should I allow my eye care provider to submit screening results?

Yes. At this time, results from your CDL medical certification are not linked to records for vision screening.

I only drive a motorcycle; do I need vision screening?

Yes. Holders of a motorcycle license, as well as a basic license, need to comply with vision screening requirements.

I received my license when I was 17, when is the next time I will have to submit a vision screening?

All new drivers in New Jersey receive a vision screening at the time of their initial licensing and these results are good for ten years. New Jersey drivers may agree to another vision screening at any time.

I renewed my license last month and just visited my eye care provider. Should I ask my eye care provider to send the MVC my screening results?

Yes. If your eye care provider is participating in the vision screening program results from prior screenings can sometimes be submitted. Eye care providers who are monitoring a condition that impacts visual acuity may require another exam/screening before submitting screening results.

I visit my eye care provider every two years. Can my vision screening results be submitted at each visit?

Yes, as long as your eye care provider is participating in the vision screening program. The MVC will always consider the date of your “last” vision screening report to determine whether you have complied with the requirement to have screening completed at least every 10 years.

Can my regular New Jersey physician submit my screening results?

Yes. A participating, licensed New Jersey physician may provide vision screening results. This includes general practitioners (your family doctor), specialists, surgeons, osteopathic doctors and other medical providers who practice in New Jersey. Your provider may sign-up for the program by visiting <http://www.nj.gov/mvc/>

Can an out-of-state eye care professional check my vision and report my screening results?

No, in order to participate in this program the provider must be licensed to practice in The State of New Jersey.

Does my eye care provider determine if I will be able to continue driving?

No. Your eye care provider will only report vision screening results. The MVC will review each report to determine if a driver meets the visual acuity standard. The MVC may conduct a medical review if the screening results indicate the driver is having difficulty meeting the standard.

My eye care provider said that I would need to pay him to submit a vision screening report. Can he charge me?

The MVC can only recommend that all eye care providers to report screening results at no cost to their patients. Drivers may contact their eye care provider or other medical professionals to ask if they participate in the NJMVC vision screening program and if there are any additional costs for them to report your results to the NJMVC.

Is the cost of vision screening covered under medical insurance?

We recommend you direct this question to your health care provider or health plan administrator.

My eye care provider completed the exam and said I would need to get a restricted license. Does that limit when I will be limited as to when I can drive?

A basic vision restriction does not limit when or where you can drive. Drivers who were first licensed and passed a vision screening without corrective lenses may now find that they need them. When an eye care provider completes vision screening, he or she may report that a driver will require wearing corrective lenses when driving. If the need for corrective lenses is reported, the MVC will add that vision restriction to the driver's record and send a notice to the driver confirming the restriction. If you request a duplicate license or renew an expiring license, the new document will include a vision restriction indicating that "Corrective lenses must be worn when driving."

I currently have a vision restriction but had laser eye surgery last year. Can the vision restriction be removed from my license?

Yes, but a participating eye care provider will need to complete a vision screening report. If the eye care provider reports corrective lenses are no longer needed and your vision is at least 20/50 acuity in one eye, the MVC will remove the restriction from your record and send a notice confirming the change. If you request a duplicate license or renew an expiring license, the new document will not include a vision restriction.

My eye care provider said that I do not meet the standard. What can I do?

You should discuss all available options with your provider and if necessary a vision specialist. A driver who cannot meet the standard may request a non-driver identification card.

I do not meet the vision standard now, but I will be able to meet the MVC vision standard after corrective eye surgery. Will I be able to submit another screening?

Yes. After corrective measures are made your eye care provider may submit results from a recent eye screening that shows corrective measures have been made and that that you now meet the standard.

Is it true that an eye care provider can submit a form without a patients' approval?

The MVC eye screening program is a program in which both the patient and the eye care provider must be willing participants.

However, medical professionals may submit a request for a medical review at any time if their belief is your driving may present harm to you or to others.